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ABSTRACT

In 1996 Howard Community College (HCC) (Maryland) developed three campus goals for the next 5 years for the enrollment, retention and graduation of minority students, and for the hiring of minority faculty and staff. These goals support the college's mission statement that guarantees all residents of its service area equal access, and its statement of beliefs that the college values the diversity of its student population. First, enrollment levels for minority students will reflect population percentages by race/ethnicity within the service area. Second, graduation and transfer rates for minority students will be equivalent to those rates for the student population as a whole. The college will reach parity in graduation and transfer for minority students in 5 years. Third, the college will meet its commitment to recruit, hire, and retain individuals who reflect the community's diversity. Specific objectives within each of these goals are also presented. College data related to enrollment, retention, transfer patterns, graduation, staff, faculty, and affirmative action are presented in tabular form, with each finding being presented for African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Hispanics, other, and Whites. The report concludes with a description of institutional activities related to minority achievement. (JJL)

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ED 431 452

HOWARD
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1996 Minority Achievement Report

Office of Planning and Evaluation
August 1, 1996

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INTRODUCTION

As a central part of its mission, Howard Community College has long been committed to service for all members of the community, especially those students who have been traditionally under-represented. This point is clearly demonstrated in the college's mission statement and its statement of beliefs. Howard Community College's mission statement guarantees *"all residents of its service area equal access."* Similarly, the college's statement of beliefs affirms that *"the college values the diversity of (its) student population."*

In support of its mission and statement of beliefs, Howard Community College has established five strategic priorities which form the central core of its strategic plan. These priorities identify significant issues for the college that go beyond ordinary operations. Their purpose is to focus resources and energies towards these issues so that the college can continue to maintain high standards and meet the challenges of the future. Three of the priorities and their goals either explicitly or implicitly incorporate issues and concerns raised by minority achievement. These priorities are Student Learning and Teaching Excellence, Student Access, and Valuing Diversity.

The Student Learning and Teaching Excellence strategic priority contains goals that ensure that students will *"achieve their stated learning objectives."* Among these objectives are career training, graduating and transferring to four-year institutions, updating job skills, changing careers, and personal enrichment. A second goal states that *"students will express satisfaction with the quality of their educational experience."* Implicit in these goals is that minority students will achieve their objectives and be satisfied with their educational experience.

The Student Access strategic priority emphasizes the college's *"commitment to all those who desire education,"* its dedication *"to enhance access and equity for its students and all those who are part of its larger community"* and its concern with *"aspects of accessibility to the community at large, especially as they relate to traditionally under-represented groups, disabled persons and those students requiring financial assistance or academic support services."*

Howard Community College's Valuing Diversity strategic priority stresses the college's commitment to *"continuous enhancement of its efforts to attract and retain a diverse population of students, faculty and staff"* and additionally *"will embrace that diversity in its hiring, employment practices, educational programming and curriculum so that diversity is recognized, valued, and ultimately incorporated into the very fabric of the institution."* This priority not only emphasizes an environment of equality and diversity for faculty and staff, but also creates an environment which is supportive of a diverse student body.

CAMPUS GOALS

Based on the strategic priorities and in concert with the guidelines set forth by the Maryland Higher Education Commission, Howard Community College has developed three primary goals for the next five years for the enrollment, retention and graduation of minority students and for the hiring of minority faculty and staff. These goals are given further direction through the development of specific objectives. All of the goals and objectives are set forth below. They cover all the predominant issues of enrollment, graduation, and retention for minority students as well as hiring and retention of minority staff. The following sections will present data for the college as set forth in the MAP guidelines. Further, the data presented will be linked to each of the goals and objectives.

Goal A: Undergraduate Enrollment

Enrollment levels for minority students will reflect population percentages by race/ethnicity within the service area.

Objective A-1: Total first-time full-time credit undergraduate headcount enrollments by race/ethnicity will reflect the population proportions of all first-time full-time freshmen at the college.

Objective A-2: Full- and part-time credit undergraduate headcount enrollments by race/ethnicity will reflect the population proportions of the service area.

Goal B: Undergraduate Retention and Graduation

Graduation and transfer rates for minority students will be equivalent to those rates for the student population as a whole. The college will reach parity in graduation and transfer for minority students in five years.

Objective B-1: Transfer rates for minority students will be equivalent to the rate for the student body as a whole.

Objective B-2: Graduation rates for minority students will be equivalent to the rate for the student body as a whole.

Goal C: Faculty and Staff

The college will meet its commitment to recruit, hire, and retain individuals who reflect the community's diversity.

Objective C-1: The college will meet or approach utilization goal targets each year.

ENROLLMENT

This section considers the enrollment of undergraduate students at Howard Community College. All enrollment figures are headcount figures for fall semesters. Enrollment figures are for first-time full- and part-time students and are broken out by race/ethnicity as indicators concerning the college's first goal on minority enrollment.

In order to analyze goal performance for student enrollment, service area population figures are required. Table 1 presents data from the 1990 census for Howard County. These data are used as the benchmark for HCC since the county is the college's primary service area and over ninety percent of its students are county residents. Since the race/ethnicity percentages for the population aged 18 and over and the entire county population are very similar, the percentages for the entire county population for all residents are used throughout.

TABLE 1: HOWARD COUNTY POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY 1990 CENSUS

RACE/ETHNICITY	POPULATION	PERCENT
African American	22,019	11.7
Native American	402	.2
Asian	8,098	4.3
Hispanic	3,699	1.9
White	155,899	83.2
Total	187,328	100

Note: Population categories and percentages total to more than total population. Hispanic category is not mutually exclusive. Source: U.S. Census 1990

Table 2 shows five-year trends in the number of first-time full-time minority students and the percentage they represented of all first-time full-time credit students. The percentage of African-American enrollment increased from 13 percent in fall 1991 to 21 percent in fall 1994 and declined to 16 percent in fall 1995. Over the five-year period, African American enrollment fluctuated between 44 and 82 students. The percentage of Asian students in the group remained between 8 and 9 percent for all years except fall 1994 when the percentage dropped to 5 percent. The "other" group showed a slight increase from 1994 to 1995, and there was an overall increase for all minority groups, with the exception of the Native American group, since 1991. Fluctuations of percentages for the smaller minority population groups are due overall to their small size. What is evident from Table 2 is that the percentage of first-time full-time minority

students enrolled, including African American students, meets or exceeds that for the county population. Clearly, based on this information, Objective A, which states that, *"Total first-time full-time credit undergraduate headcount enrollments by race/ethnicity will reflect the population proportions of all first-time full-time freshmen at the college,"* has been met. Additionally, it should be noted that the objective has been met for the past five years.

TABLE 2: FIRST-TIME FULL-TIME FALL CREDIT ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY FALL 1991 - 1995

RACE/ETHNICITY	FALL 1991		FALL 1992		FALL 1993		FALL 1994		FALL 1995	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
African American	44	13.1	46	12.9	79	18.1	82	20.9	68	15.9
Native American	3	0.9	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.3	1	0.2
Asian	27	8.0	30	8.4	40	9.2	18	4.6	36	8.4
Hispanic	6	1.8	11	3.1	11	2.5	11	2.8	10	2.3
Other	7	2.1	11	3.1	11	2.5	12	3.1	16	3.8
White	249	74.1	258	72.3	296	67.7	268	68.4	297	69.4
Total	336	100	357	100	437	100	392	100	428	100

Five-year trends in the number of full-time minority students and the percentage they represented of all full-time students are shown in Table 3. The percentage of all full-time minority students, with the exception of Native Americans, increased from 1991 to 1995. The number of Native Americans declined in 1992 and then returned to 1991 levels in 1994, only to decline again in 1995. While there was no growth in the percentage of African American students between fall 1991 and fall 1992, the rate increased three percentage points from fall 1992 to 1995. Over the past five years enrollment percentages for all minorities at HCC reflected county minority population composition for all groups. Again it should be noted that for the very small populations, fluctuations in percentages are not serious concerns.

TABLE 3: FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY
FALL 1991 - 1995

RACE/ETHNICITY	FALL 1991		FALL 1992		FALL 1993		FALL 1994		FALL 1995	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
African American	154	13.5	165	13.3	202	15.5	199	15.4	214	16.3
Native American	9	0.8	4	0.3	5	0.4	9	0.7	3	0.2
Asian	71	6.2	97	7.8	104	8.0	100	7.7	111	8.5
Hispanic	14	1.2	33	2.7	35	2.7	32	2.5	32	2.4
Other	26	2.3	23	1.9	43	3.3	43	3.3	48	3.7
White	872	76.1	914	73.9	913	70.1	908	70.3	905	68.9
Total	1146	100	1236	100	1302	100	1291	100	1313	100

Table 4 shows five-year trends in the number of part-time minority students and the percentage they represented of all part-time students. The number and percentage of African-American and Asian students steadily increased over the five-year period. Native American part-time enrollment remained stable. Although the Hispanic and "other" group increased from 1991 to 1995, numbers and percentages fluctuated over the period. Over the past five years, enrollment percentages at HCC have reflected county minority population composition for all groups. Based upon the findings for full- and part-time students over the past five years, it is evident that Objective A-2, which states that *"Full- and part-time credit undergraduate headcount enrollments by race/ethnicity will reflect the population proportions of the service area,"* has been met or exceeded.

TABLE 4: PART-TIME UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY
FALL 1991 - 1995

RACE/ETHNICITY	FALL 1991		FALL 1992		FALL 1993		FALL 1994		FALL 1995	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
African American	478	12.8	500	13.4	526	14.0	623	16.8	668	17.5
Native American	14	0.4	11	0.3	13	0.3	13	0.4	20	0.5
Asian	156	4.2	161	4.3	182	4.9	183	4.9	191	5.0
Hispanic	54	1.4	49	1.3	79	2.1	73	2.0	83	2.2
Other	83	2.2	107	2.9	88	2.3	116	3.1	132	3.5
White	29522	79.0	2897	77.8	2860	76.3	2692	72.8	2723	71.3
Total	3737	100	3725	100	3748	100	3700	100	3817	100

In conclusion, based on the preceding information and analysis, it is clear that HCC has met its overall goal for minority student enrollment consistently over the past five years. This is true for all categories of student status including first-time, full-time and part-time as well as other breakdowns not shown in this report. In addition, the college has met similar goals for its enrollment patterns in its continuing education courses.

RETENTION AND GRADUATION

This section of the report considers the retention and graduation rates of HCC students. Specifically, the information contained in this section looks at the transfer patterns and graduation rates of cohorts entering HCC four years after their first enrollment. These cohorts are based on the entry of first-time full-time students to the college. Data on these students are provided by the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

TABLE 5-A: TRANSFER PATTERNS BY RACE/ETHNICITY
FOUR YEARS AFTER FIRST ENROLLMENT
1987 - 1991 COHORTS

RACE/ ETHNICITY	PERCENT TRANSFERRED COHORTS					NUMBER TRANSFERRED COHORTS				
	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
African American	23.5	30.5	34.9	19.0	12.2	8	11	15	4	5
Native American	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	0	0	0	0	2
Asian	40.0	30.0	50.0	36.4	26.0	2	3	9	4	6
Hispanic	0.0	33.3	0.0	20.0	16.7	0	2	0	1	1
Other/Foreign	0.0	33.3	37.5	33.3	11.1	0	1	3	2	1
White	35.6	44.5	40.2	37.6	32.7	62	78	82	53	81
Total	33.1	40.3	39.1	34.3	29.1	72	95	109	64	96

Table 5-A, Transfer Patterns by Race/Ethnicity and Table 5-B Graduation Patterns by Race/Ethnicity, show the percentage of new full-time, degree-seeking students in the cohorts of 1987 to 1991 who had within four years of matriculation transferred to a four-year public college or university and/or earned a community college degree or certificate. Once again it should be noted that the low numbers of students in the Native American, Asian, Hispanic and Other/Foreign categories may have caused large variations in the percentages from year to year. The numbers for African-American and white students are large enough to analyze some

trends. For African-American students the percentage transferring increased steadily between 1987 and 1989 from 23.5 percent to 34.9 percent, but decreased to 19 percent for 1990 entrants and continued to decrease to 12 percent for those who entered in 1991. For White students the percentage has fluctuated between a low of 33 percent to a high of 44 percent. Overall, the transfer rate of African-American students is currently 17 percentage points below that of the entire student population. This rate is not an improvement over prior years; therefore, Objective B-1, which states that *"Transfer rates for minority students will be equivalent to the rate for the student body as a whole,"* has not been met.

When considering the graduation rates for students, the rate for African-American students is generally lower than for the entire student population. While the rate had risen from a low of 6 percent for the 1987 year to 14 percent for the 1988 cohort, the level dropped to approximately 9% for the 1989 and 1990 cohorts and then to 0 for 1991. Over the past three years the graduation rate for all students has been between 14 and 16 percent. Again, the rate of graduation for African-American students is lower than for the student body as a whole and has not shown improvement over the past three years. Therefore, Objective B-2, which states that *"Graduation rates for minority students will be equivalent to the rate for the student body as a whole,"* has not been met.

TABLE 5-B: GRADUATION PATTERNS BY RACE/ETHNICITY
FOUR YEARS AFTER FIRST ENROLLMENT
1987 - 1991 COHORTS

RACE/ ETHNICITY	PERCENT GRADUATED COHORTS					NUMBER GRADUATED COHORTS				
	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
African American	5.8	13.9	9.3	9.5	0.0	2	5	4	2	0
Native American	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	60.0	20.0	22.3	0.0	13.0	3	2	4	0	3
Hispanic	0.0	16.7	33.3	20.0	33.4	0	1	1	1	2
Other/Foreign	0.0	83.3	50.0	16.7	11.1	0	3	4	1	1
White	19.5	17.7	15.7	19.2	16.5	34	31	32	27	41
Total	17.9	17.8	16.1	16.6	14.2	39	42	45	31	47

The previous information makes it clear that the college has not met its goals and objectives for the transfer and graduation of its first-time full-time minority students. Graduation and transfer rates for African-American students fall short of overall rates for the whole student

body. Again, the low numbers in all groups caused large variations in percentages from year to year, making it difficult to track trends.

Another and important caveat should be introduced here concerning minority graduation rates. The graduation (as well as transfer) rates are for first-time full-time students. College objectives and rates for all students should be considered. Table 6, Graduates by Race/Ethnicity shows the graduates of HCC by race/ethnicity for the past five years. When the data for all students are considered, the graduation rates for all students shows that minority students have been very close to the college objective. What is clear from this table is that students may take different paths to graduation. A first-time full-time cohort is a traditional way of measuring success and may be appropriate for four-year institutions. However, community colleges serve diverse student populations and we believe that overall student graduation and transfer rates must be considered.

TABLE 6: GRADUATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY
FY 1991 - 1995

RACE/ ETHNICITY	1991		1992		1993		1994		1995	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
African American	27	11.1	24	9.1	26	9.4	19	6.7	28	8.6
Native American	0	0.0	1	0.4	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.6
Asian	9	3.7	7	2.7	15	5.4	5	1.8	11	3.4
Hispanic	3	1.2	5	1.9	5	1.8	6	2.1	7	2.2
Other/Foreign	3	1.2	7	2.7	4	1.4	3	1.1	9	2.8
White	204	82.9	220	83.3	224	81.2	248	88.3	267	82.4
Total	246	100	264	100	276	100	281	100	324	100

FACULTY AND STAFF

This section is designed to examine the college's success in recruiting, hiring and retaining minority faculty and staff. Tables 7, 8, and 9 present five year data for managerial staff, faculty and other professional employees respectively.

Table 7 shows five-year trends in the number of full-time minority executive/administrative/ managerial employees and the percentage they represented of all employees in this category. Over the period the percentage of minority executive/managerial staff has remained relatively constant, hovering around 20 percent.

TABLE 7: FULL-TIME EXECUTIVE/ADMINISTRATIVE/MANAGERIAL STAFF BY RACE/ETHNICITY FALL 1991 - 1995

RACE/ ETHNICITY	FALL 1991		FALL 1992		FALL 1993		FALL 1994		FALL 1995	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
African American	4	17.4	4	16.7	5	20.8	5	20.8	5	20.0
Native American	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Asian	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Hispanic	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other/Foreign	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
White	19	82.6	20	83.3	19	79.2	19	79.2	20	80.0
Total	23	100	24	100	24	100	24	100	25	100

Five-year trends in the number of full-time minority faculty and the percentage they represented of all faculty are shown in Table 8. The overall increase for all minority faculty from 1991 to 1995 was 5 percentage points, increasing from 19.3 percent of the total faculty to 24.4 percent in 1995. For African-American faculty the percentage rose from 15.4 to 19.1, a gain of nearly four percentage points.

These percentages show commitment to a diverse faculty. The faculty has grown from 78 members in 1991 to 94 in 1995, an increase of 16. During this period, the number of minority faculty increased from 15 to 23, an increase of 8. Essentially, one-half of all new faculty hires have been minorities.

TABLE 8: FULL-TIME FACULTY BY RACE/ETHNICITY
FALL 1991 - 1995

RACE/ ETHNICITY	FALL 1991		FALL 1992		FALL 1993		FALL 1994		FALL 1995	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
African American	12	15.4	12	14.1	14	15.7	18	20.0	18	19.1
Native American	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Asian	2	2.6	4	4.7	3	3.4	3	3.3	3	3.2
Hispanic	1	1.3	1	1.2	1	1.1	1	1.1	2	2.1
Other/Foreign	0	0.0	1	1.2	1	1.1	3	3.3	4	4.3
White	63	80.8	67	78.8	69	77.5	65	72.2	67	71.3
Total	78	100	85	100	89	100	90	100	94	100

Table 9 shows five-year trends in the number of full-time minority "other professional" employees and the percentage they represented of all employees in this category. The percentage of minority employees has increased over the past five years from 13 percent in 1991 to 25 percent in 1995.

TABLE 9: FULL-TIME "OTHER PROFESSIONAL" STAFF BY RACE/ETHNICITY
FALL 1991 - 1995

RACE/ETHNICITY	FALL 1991		FALL 1992		FALL 1993		FALL 1994		FALL 1995	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
African American	1	6.3	1	7.7	2	13.3	2	12.5	3	18.8
Native American	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Asian	1	6.3	1	7.7	1	6.7	1	6.3	1	6.3
Hispanic	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other/Foreign	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
White	14	87.5	11	84.6	12	80.0	13	81.3	12	75.0
Total	16	100	13	100	15	100	16	100	16	100

The information contained in these tables cannot be interpreted unless the college's utilization analysis is put forth. Table 10 shows the college utilization analysis by job category which goes beyond the categorizations covered above. This information was obtained from the

college's utilization analysis which is part of its affirmative action plan. As can be seen in the table, categories of employees are compared to the utilization rates for those categories. Utilization rates vary for each category depending upon the availability of minorities within each job category. This availability rate is dependent upon the area of search as well. For some jobs the area of search is local, while for others it is national. This search area correlates roughly with the level of the job. As one moves up the organizational hierarchy, the area of the search expands. A complete analysis of the factors which go into availability can be found in the college's Affirmative Action Plan.

TABLE 10: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN UTILIZATION ANALYSIS AND GOALS FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

EMPLOYEE CATEGORY	AVAILABILITY/GOALS		3/1/96 LEVELS	
	African-American	Total Minority	African-American	Total Minority
Executive/Administrative/Managerial	15%	21%	15%	15%
Senior Faculty	18%	27%	9%	13%
Non-senior Faculty	13%	22%	33%	40%
Counseling Faculty	27%	33%	38%	38%
Professionals (Non-faculty)	21%	28%	12%	16%
Secretarial/Clerical	20%	26%	20%	21%
Technical/Paraprofessional	21%	27%	13%	19%
Skilled Crafts	20%	32%	17%	17%
Service Maintenance	37%	48%	88%	88%

The college goal is to "meet its commitment to recruit, hire, and retain individuals who reflect the community's diversity." This is operationalized in Objective C-1, which states "*The college will meet or approach utilization goal targets each year.*" As can be seen in the table, in non-senior faculty, counseling faculty and service maintenance the college has met its utilization target for both African-American and total minorities. Categories in which the college's utilization levels for African American and total minorities must improve to meet target levels are senior faculty, professionals, technical/paraprofessionals and skilled crafts. With regard to senior faculty, the college does not as a rule hire senior faculty, and promotion to that rank for minorities will come with time. Overall, the college has not progressed toward fulfilling its objective over the past year. Areas where the percentages fall below target must be actively pursued through college future hires.

INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES

This section of the report is designed to describe institutional activities which relate to minority achievement statistics reported in the previous sections. The activities are divided into three categories: enrollment (including programs aimed at recruiting minority students), student retention (academic advising, personal counseling, developmental education, extracurricular programming), and faculty and staff (recruitment and professional development).

Enrollment

Activities designed to increase minority enrollment are not an issue at Howard Community College since the college has met its minority enrollment goal every semester for over ten years. The admissions office is to be commended for this outstanding effort. We will focus instead on other areas for activities.

Student Retention

During FY96 two Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) teams were formed to focus on specific student needs and to develop strategies to assist students in reaching their goals. One team was established to study the needs of special populations with particularly high attrition rates. Initially the team worked to improve the retention of 18-24 year old African American males. Focus group outcomes indicated that African American male students are interested in receiving additional academic support through mentoring programs, study skill/tutoring sessions, learning communities and caring faculty. A program of activities to improve the retention of these students was recommended by the team and is currently under consideration for implementation. Future special population teams to address the needs of other groups are being planned.

The other CQI team looked at probation intervention. Proactive approaches to provide students help in structuring effective study habits and setting goals, career planning and academic advising were recommended. Among these approaches were several models for mentoring programs, the institution of special orientation sessions for ESL students, restriction of course load, a study skills course requirement, new topics for general student orientation, and the development of a support group to provide success strategies and recognition. These recommendations are being considered for implementation at HCC.

The student services area has in place a number of services and has conducted numerous activities to increase minority retention and success rates. Some of these programs are noted below.

Academic Advising is provided by a Special Populations Counselor who is designated to work with all probationary and readmitted students. Those readmitted students, who are allowed to enroll after screening by an academic screening committee, must sign a counseling contract promising to attend academic monitory and personal counseling sessions.

Counseling and crisis intervention are available for students experiencing personal, social or adjustment concerns relating to college. These services are provided by the Academic Support and Career Services office in conjunction with the college's Employee Assistance Program.

Developmental Education is supported through the implementation of pre-enrollment placement tests. College policies and procedures mandate that students assessed as having developmental education needs must enroll in a prescribed sequence of courses. Those courses are structured to provide remedial assistance, skill strengthening and academic enhancements. The goal of each carefully structured course is to promote classroom success in assessed academic areas of English, mathematics, reading and writing.

Extracurricular programming includes a structured counseling support group entitled STRETCH ("Students Trying to Reach Educational Tasks, Challenges and Hurdles") provides bi-weekly motivational workshops, guest speakers, question and answer sessions as well as academic success strategy programs. Attendance is voluntary. The subject content and programs are chosen by participants based on their needs. Phone numbers are exchanged for interactions outside of the college environment. Selected programming is supported and funded through Student Activities. Individual student development and achievements are monitored by group advisors and sponsors. STRETCH group leaders are professional staff members from Student Support Services. Representatives from various academic and student support units are invited as speakers and resource persons at bi-weekly meetings. These presentations promote their service area utilization and provide key linkages to support service areas.

In several areas of the college such as the library, learning resources center, tutorial services and the testing center, more emphasis is placed on quality customer service and improved supportive instructional quality for the enhancement of student educational performance. Some self-paced developmental instructional modules in English, mathematics, reading, and study skills have been implemented. Because not all students develop at the same rate nor make progress in a similar manner, these self-paced units have enabled students to work at their own pace, to accelerate or spend more time on areas where academic assistance is necessary and appropriate. Extra-curricular programming includes pre- and post-enrollment student orientation sessions to acquaint students with available instructional assistance resources, student support services, and related academic major clubs. Faculty, support staff, and administrators participated to meet students, answer questions and present information about their various areas and functions. Included in these orientation sessions are focus groups for various populations including older returning students, international students, and minority students.

The instructional area is very involved in efforts to improve student retention. The multifaceted activities are directed toward improving student competency levels in basic skills, general education, and in various disciplines at the course and program levels. It is the intent that assessment leads to identification of the impact of teaching and that the need for

instructional revision will be indicated. The improvement of the instructional process will lead to increased retention of all student populations. This is achieved through policy and procedures change and through direct course and program modification.

During the past year, several outcomes assessment projects related to levels of student performance and, hence, retention. Efforts have been underway for several years to improve the skill level in the basic skills areas of math and writing. Both areas underwent assessment which either led to revision or indicated progress toward established goals in these areas. In mathematics, changes were interwoven with the new state requirements in general education. Assessments have indicated that course persistence and skill disintegration are factors in retention. A new curriculum in mathematics will help identify more precise skill levels for placement and will allow students to focus on more manageable blocks of content as they progress in the curriculum.

In another instance, the implementation of writing-intensive courses has continued. An assessment indicates that the number of writing courses taken has a strong correlation to the level of skill, and that completion of three such courses results in achievement of a satisfactory level of writing skill. In conjunction with this, new general education requirements have led to inclusion of a two-sequence writing course in all programs.

In specific discipline areas of philosophy, history and anatomy and physiology, student progress was measured and areas of needed change were identified. Course revision within each of these disciplines is slated to be completed this year. This activity is anticipated to improve student retention. Other areas, including economics and accounting, entered the third year of an assessment cycle. That is, they were initially assessed several years ago, curricular revision was enacted, and they were re-tested this past year. Each area showed considerable improvement in competency levels as compared with normed tests and professional standards.

The goal of outcomes assessment at Howard Community College is to improve students' learning and, hence, their ability to perform in the "real" world. This is designed to improve retention and success for minority and non-minority students. The examples described above are only a few of the many assessment projects directed toward the same goal -- student success.

Faculty and Staff

The college has also conducted a series of activities through its Diversity Committee for the faculty and staff. These activities, which focus on cultural experience and address a wide variety of issues related to diversity, are designed to reach ***both students and staff***. Diversity activities during the past year included a trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. and literature readings by Li-Young Lee from *The Winged Seed*, Maxine Clair from *Rattlebone*, and David Levering Lewis from *Rage and Fire: The Lives of W.E.B. DuBois and Louse Colet*. Plays accompanied by panel discussions included Paul Rudnick's *Jeffrey*, considering relationships in the AIDS-ridden 90's; Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass*, examining Jewish identity and the consequences of denial; David Mamet's *Oleanna*, confronting the controversy between a young student and her male college professor; and Dr. Endesha Ida

Mae Holland's *From the Mississippi Delta,* describing an African-American woman's journey from poverty to empowerment. Other presentations included video conferences on affirmative action and support services for students with disabilities. Additionally, activities for faculty and staff included workshops on *The Challenge of Diversity* and *Skills for Communication Across Cultures.*